

REMARKS

The specification (Abstract) and the claims (claim 4) have been amended so as to overcome the formal objections of the Examiner.

Concerning claim 6, the Examiner asks how "a section of material of greater resiliency" can be arranged "in said seal body".

Claim 6 has been amended so as to clarify the matter. As to the question of the Examiner, in this respect, it is noted that a section of a material does have a greater resiliency when it is further removed from its support or is thinner than other sections. In any case, the Examiner himself states that Panik discloses a seal element with a seal element body which has two sections consisting of material of different resiliency and explains that "the thickness of various portions of the seal body provide different resiliencies throughout the seal body".

Incidentally, concerning Panik (US 2 813 748), which has been cited by the Examiner in his rejection of claims 1 - 8 under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipating the present invention, it is noted that Panik discloses a header assembly for vehicle closures", that is, a window seal which comprises a hinged seal member which is biased by a spring 40 toward the frame of the closed window panel. It is noted however that the seal structure does not hold the window, rather the window edge holds the seal in engagement with the door frame against the force of the spring 40: As apparent from Fig. 7, where the window frame 66, is shown upon closing of the vehicle door 12, being moved (see arrow 72) toward the leg 53 of the seal whereby the seal structure is pivoted inwardly and the leg 35 (or 36c) is pivoted downward into engagement with the window frame 66, the window holds the seal structure in a sealing position. Certainly, the spring element or its arm does nothing to hold the seal against outer forces such as vacuum forces effective on the window during high speed operation of the vehicle.

In fact, the seal structure of US 2 813 748 is concerned alone with the sealing of a door frame against the body of a vehicle. And the arrangement does nothing to hold the seal element leg 36 or 53 in engagement with the frame structure 20 or 30 when, during high speed vehicle operation, the side window 15 of the vehicle is biased outwardly by the vacuum generated by the air flow. On the contrary, the spring 40 enhances the disengagement of the seal leg 36 or 53 from the vehicle frame thereby increasing the chances of generation of wind noises.

In contrast, in the arrangement according to the present invention, wherein the seal body 4 is mounted on the vehicle component 2, that is, the door frame such that its outer side surface forms a seal when the door is closed, the seal body 4 is supported at the inside by a reinforcement structure 7, which supports the elastic seal member 4 from the back when the door is closed against the vehicle frame structure forming the door opening (not shown). The whole seal member 4 is mounted to the door frame 2 by a bolt 10, which also supports the reinforcement structure 7 so as to be adjustable and which is adjusted so that an end portion thereof extends essentially parallel with the adjacent area of the seal member 4 to provide back support therefor, that is, to hold the seal member in firm engagement with the adjacent vehicle door opening frame when vacuum forces tend to pull the window, the top edge of which is engaged by an extension 4a of the same seal member 4, outwardly. However, since the top edge is firmly (though resiliently) engaged by the seal member (when the window is closed), the window is sealed against the seal and, since the seal member 4 is held in engagement with the door opening frame by the reinforcement structure 7, no air leakage noises are generated, neither at the sealed area between the seal body 4 as the area 4b thereof is held in close contact with the door opening frame nor between the frameless window 3 and the seal member 4, which is firmly engaged with the area 4a of the seal member 4. If noises do occur, the reinforcement member 7 can be adjusted such that the seal member 4 properly engages and seals the door against the door opening frame.

In accordance therewith, claim 1 defines a seal element (1) for a vehicle component (2) (i.e. - a door), comprising a seal body (4) which delimits a seal space (5) that is engaged by a vehicle component (3) (window) when the vehicle component (3) is in a sealed position wherein the seal element (1) includes a reinforcement structure (7) supported in the seal space (5) so as to be movable relative to the seal body (4) to permit positioning of the reinforcement structure (7) so as to abut a portion of the seal body (4) and mounting means for fixing the reinforcement structure 7 in its position abutting the seal body (4).

The reference does not disclose, or in any way suggests such a seal structure - as explained earlier - which includes an adjustable support structure for holding the seal in its sealing position when forces act on the vehicle component, that is, the window 3, which pull the seal away from its sealing position.

And since this feature is not disclosed in, nor in any way suggested by, the reference cited by the Examiner, the invention is certainly not anticipated by the cited reference nor can it be considered in any way obvious from the cited reference.

Reconsideration of claim 1 is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 2 defines the particular support structure by which the reinforcement structure 7 is supported so as to be adjustable.

Claim 3 defines the reinforcement structure to be partially circular in shape, whereby a particular adjustment possibility is provided.

Claim 4 defines another embodiment for the shape of the reinforcement structure.

Claim 5 defines that the resiliency of the seal body is different in section thereof.

Claim 6 defines that the engagement area of the seal body has a greater resiliency than the rest of the body.

Claim 7 defines that a mounting element is provided by which the reinforcement element can be mounted in a particular position, and

Claim 8 defines that the reinforcement structure consists of a metal sheet.

These are all features which are considered to be particular advantageous in connection with a seal element as defined in claim 1.

And since all these claims depend directly or indirectly on claim 1, they all include the features as defined in claim 1.

They should therefore be patentable together with claim 1 already for that reason.

Reconsideration also of the dependent claims 2 to 8 is respectfully requested and allowance of claims 1 - 8 as amended is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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